

Life after Solyndra: Fremont pumps its cleantech agenda



The City of Fremont held a legislative event Thursday at Tesla's local factory focusing on the city's long-term development goals. Lauren Hepler



by [Lauren Hepler](#), Silicon Valley Business Journal May 3, 2013 | 8:15am EDT

Fremont is trying to shake its Solyndra hangover once and for all.

The California city north of San Jose and south of Oakland is looking to expand its cleantech and biotech sectors—currently bolstered by tenants like **Tesla Motors** and **Thermo Fisher**—after the high-profile combustion of Fremont-based solar provider Solyndra last year. The cleantech focus is on top of a push for new residential, retail and office development in the area around the Warm Springs BART station slated for completion in 2015.

Look for new Requests For Proposals from the city in the coming months and a focus on public-private partnerships to make that happen.

“We are growing our innovation economy,” said Fremont Mayor **Bill Harrison** at a legislative brunch held yesterday at Tesla’s manufacturing facility in the city.

To make his plan a reality, the city will have to keep forward momentum going after big recent real estate transactions. Seagate bought Solyndra’s former 411,600-square-foot building last fall, and Thermo Fisher is expanding there with a new 200,000-square-foot R&D and manufacturing facility.

The city aims to keep building the 800-acre South Fremont/Warm Springs area that houses both of those properties, as well as Tesla's factory, by designating the area an innovation district.

To help with that effort, the city hired a consultant focused on identifying opportunities in smart grid technology.

"Fremont has a unique opportunity," said **Christine Herzog**, the city's smart grid consultant and managing director of the Smart Grid Library. She said that if the city keeps growing its cleantech operations, it could be situated to set up "incubators" for experimental technology in the industry.

Herzog said the city already houses companies working in several fields related to smart grid development, like semiconductors, communications, solar energy, energy storage and smart transportation.

Fremont has also hired an outside public relations firm to reach out to potential corporate development partners.

"We want the corporate world to know we are very serious about doing business with them," said **Kelly Kline**, the city's economic development director. "It's a big turnaround for Fremont."